BELSHAZZAR.

AN

ORATORIO.

As it is Perform'd at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

The MUSICK by Mr. HANDEL.

——*Grave & immutabile Sanctis*
Pondus adeſt Verbis, & Vocem Fata ſequuntur.
STAT. THEB. lib. 1.

LONDON:
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BELSHAZZAR, *King of* Babylon.

NITOCRIS, *Mother of* Belſhazzar.

CYRUS, *Prince of* Perſia.

DANIEL, *a* Jewiſh *Prophet*,

GOBRYAS, *an* Aſſyrian *Nobleman, revolted to* Cyrus.

ARIOCH, *a* Babylonian *Lord.*

Meſſenger.

Chorus of Babylonians.

Chorus of Jews.

Chorus of Medes *and* Perſians.

Advertiſement to the Reader.

The *Oratorio* being thought too long, ſeveral things are mark'd with a black Line drawn down the Margin as omitted in the Performance: And the Reader is to take notice, That the *Oratorio* begins Page 6. ACT I. SCENE II. *Behold by* Perſia's, *&c.*

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BELSHAZZAR.

AN

ORATORIO.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The PALACE *in* Babylon.

NITOCRIS.

VAIN fluctuating State of Human Empire!
First ſmall and weak it ſcarcely rears its Head,
Scarce ſtretching out its helpleſs Infant Arms,
Implores Protection of its neighbour States,
Who nurſe it to their Hurt. Anon it ſtrives
For Pow'r and Wealth, and ſpurns at Oppoſition.
Arriv'd to full Maturity it graſps
At all within its Reach, o'erleaps all Bounds,
Robs, ravages and waſtes the frighted World.
At length grown old, and ſwell'd to Bulk enormous,
The Monſter in its proper Bowels feeds
Pride, Luxury, Corruption, Perfidy,
Contention, fell Diſeaſes of a State,
That prey upon her Vitals. Of her Weakneſs
Some other riſing Power advantage takes,
(Unequal Match!) plies with repeated Strokes
Her infirm aged Trunk: She nods — ſhe totters —
She falls — alas! never to riſe again.
The Victor State upon her Ruins rais'd,
Runs the ſame ſhadowy Round of fancy'd Greatneſs,
Meets the ſame certain End.

ACT I.

Thou, God moſt high, and Thou alone
Unchang'd for ever doſt remain:
Through boundleſs Space extends thy Throne,
Through all Eternity thy Reign.
As nothing in thy Sight
The reptile Man appears,
Howe'er imagin'd Great:
Who can impair thy Might:
In Heav'n or Earth who dares
Diſpute thy Pow'r? — Thy Will is Fate. Da Capo.

O *Babylon!* how faſt thy Fate approaches!
Of all the ſpacious Eaſt no Place remains
Yet unſubdu'd but this. The rapid *Cyrus*
Has, like the ancient univerſal Deluge,
O'erflow'd the Subject Earth. What Strength is left
To ſtem the Torrent? — Brazen Gates — thick Walls ——
A River deep. — Vain Strength, to guard a People
Who court their Ruin! He whom it moſt concerns,
To Sloth abandon'd and immers'd in Pleaſure,
Is to his People loſt —— and to himſelf.
The People, by his high Example led,
Let looſe the Reins to Vice. Idolatry,
Rankeſt of Weeds, has long o'er-run the Soil,
And for Exciſion calls. What I could do
I have done to avert it. Small my Skill,
Had not the *Hebrew* Prophet with his Counſel
Supported my weak Steps. See, where he comes:
Wiſdom and Goodneſs in his Front ſerene
Conſpicuous ſit inthron'd.

Enter DANIEL.

Nit. O much belov'd
Of God and Man! Say, is there ought can ſave
This ſinking State?

Dan. Great Queen, 'tis not in Man
To pry into the Counſels of Omniſcience.

Nit. I know, for thou haſt taught me, Wiſdom dwells
In none but God, in Him alone is Power:
He at his Will removes and ſets up Kings.

Yet

Yet oft ſome Rays of the Divine Foreknowledge
On Man have ſhone: to thee he has laid open
The deep and ſecret Things of Providence:
For Thou haſt look'd into the Seeds of Time,
Foretold the Fate of Empires; This for one,
To my great Father. I remember well
His viſion of the four ſucceſſive Kingdoms,
Which thou alone couldſt tell, and couldſt interpret.
All things concur to ſhew the Time is near,
When this ſhall end: — perhaps thou know'ſt, how near.

Dan. 'Tis true, O Queen, God by my Mouth reveal'd
To that great Prince the End of Human States;
But not the Time preciſe. The Times and Seaſons
In his own Pow'r reſerv'd th' Eternal Mind,
Nor ſhew'd to Man. For what he has imparted
'Tis ours to praiſe him, to uſe That aright,
And reſt contented. Yet you well obſerve
An apt Concurrence of Events to point
The Time not far. — But you have done your Duty. —
I mine. No more remains, but to ſubmit
To what God only wiſe and juſt ordains.

Nit. *Ah! falling Country! — Ah! my Son!*
You think not of impending Fate,
Nor fear to bring the Judgments down
That Crimes like yours await;
But truſt, unſeaſonably brave,
In Walls, in Gates, in Depth of Wave,
In Idol Gods that cannot ſave!
Alas! that I ſhould live to bear
The Loſs of all I hold moſt dear?

Dan. *Lament not thus, O Queen, in vain!*
Virtue's Part is to reſign
All things to the Will Divine,
Nor of its juſt Decrees complain.
The Sins of Babylon *urge on her Fate;*
But Virtue ſtill this Comfort gives;
On Earth ſhe finds a ſafe Retreat,
Or bleſt in Heav'n for ever lives.

ACT I. SCENE II.

The Camp of *Cyrus* before *Babylon*. A View of the City, with the River *Euphrates* running through it.

Cyrus, Gobryas, Medes, *and* Persians.

Chorus of *Babylonians* upon the Walls, deriding *Cyrus* as engag'd in an impracticable Undertaking.

Behold by Persia's *Hero made*
In ample Form the strong Blockade!
How broad the Ditch! — How deep it falls!
What lofty Tow'rs o'erlook the Walls!
Hark, Cyrus, —— *Twenty times the Sun*
Round the great Year his Course shall run: ——
If there so long thy Army stay,
Not yet to Dogs and Birds a Prey,
No Succour from without arrive,
Within remain no means to live,
We then may think it time to treat,
And Babylon *capitulate.*
A tedious time! —— *to make it short,*
Thy wise Attempt will find us Sport!

Gobr. Well may they laugh, from meagre Famine safe
In plenteous Stores for more than twenty Years;
From all Assault secure in Gates of Brass,
And Walls stupendous; in *Euphrates'* Depth
Yet more secure.

Cyr. 'Tis that Security
Shall aid me to their Ruin. I tell thee, *Gobryas*,
I will revenge thy Wrongs upon the Head
Of this inhuman King.

RECIT. *accompany'd.*

Gobr. O Memory
Still bitter to my Soul! — methinks I see
My Son, the best, the loveliest of Mankind,
Whose filial Love and Duty above all Sons
Made me above all other Fathers happy;
I see him breathless at the Tyrant's Feet,
The Victim of his Envy!

AIR.

AIR.

Oppreſt with never ceaſing Grief,
I drag a painful weary Life,
Of all that made Life ſweet bereft;
No Hope but in Revenge is left.

AIR.

Cyrus. *Dry thoſe unavailing Tears;*
Haſte your juſt Revenge to ſpeed;
I'll diſperſe your gloomy Fears,
Dawning Hope ſhall ſoon ſucceed.

RECIT.

Be comforted: Safe tho' the Tyrant ſeem
Within thoſe Walls, I have a Stratagem
Inſpir'd by Heav'n, (Dreams oft deſcend from Heav'n,)
Shall baffle all his Strength; ſo ſtrong my Mind
Th' Impreſſion bears, I cannot think it leſs.

RECIT. *accompany'd.*

Methought, as on the Bank of deep *Euphrates*
I ſtood, revolving in my anxious Mind
Our arduous Enterpriſe, a Voice divine,
In Thunder utter'd, to the bottom ſeem'd
To pierce the River's Depth: The lofty Tow'rs
Of yon proud City trembling bow'd their Heads,
As they would kiſs the Ground. "Thou Deep, it ſaid,
"Be dry." No more, but inſtant, at the Word,
The Stream forſook his Banks, and in a Moment
Left bare his oozy Bed. Amaz'd I ſtood:
Horror, till then unknown, uprais'd my Hair,
And froze my falt'ring Tongue. The Voice renew'd:
"*Cyrus*, go on and conquer: 'Tis I that rais'd thee,
"I will direct thy Way. Build thou my City,
"And without Ranſom ſet my Captives free."
Gob. It was a Viſion fair and fortunate,
And calls to my Remembrance ſtrange Events,
Before almoſt forgot. The *Jewiſh* People,
Of old the Favourites of Heav'n, ſo prov'd
By various Signs, miraculous Protections,
Nor leſs miraculous Vengeance on their Foes
Egyptian or *Aſſyrian*, till their Crimes,
Heap'd to the popular Sum, incens'd their God
To leave them, and expoſe their Land, their City,

His Temple glorioufly magnificent,
With all his ſacred things, a Scorn and Prey
To that proud City that now braves your Arms:
This People by our late victorious King,
Nebuchadnezzar, from their native Land
To this were carry'd Captive. Some of theſe,
For Beauty, Science, Prudence moſt remark'd,
Choſe from their Fellows, ſtood before the King:
Daniel above the reſt, for Virtue fam'd,
And by his God belov'd, whoſe Holy Spirit
In his pure Breaſt, as in a Temple dwelling,
Enriches it with Knowledge more than Human.
The King's prophetick Dream himſelf forgot,
He knew, and did interpret. O'er this Province
He was for this made Ruler; and tho' he,
Who now unworthy reigns, regards him not,
Scarce knows his Name, awake to Pleaſure only,
Unmindful of whate'er is Great or Good,
The Queen his Mother, to whoſe Government
He ſlothful leaves the State, well knows his Merit,
And by his Counſel moves. If ought of Weight
Is in your Dream, this ſure muſt be the People,
And theirs the City meant.

Cyr. *Thy wondrous Tale with Rapture fills my Breaſt!*
O Cyrus, *more than Mortals bleſt!*
At once a Tyrant's Reign to end,
Avenge thy Wrongs, my injur'd Friend,
Reſtore a People long oppreſt,
From Exile to their native Land,
And execute Divine Command!

RECIT.

Now tell me, *Gobryas*, does not this *Euphrates*
Flow through the midſt of *Babylon?*

Gobr. It does.

Cyr. And I have heard you ſay, that on the Weſt
A monſtrous Lake on ev'ry ſide extended
Four hundred Furlongs, while the Banks were made,
Receiv'd th' exhauſted River.

Gobr. 'Tis moſt true.
The Lake, you ſee, remains, and the Canal,
Through which the Water flow'd: For ſtill *Euphrates*
Swell'd once a Year above his Banks by Snow
In Summer melted from *Armenian* Mountains, Would

Would deluge all the Country, but that there
Divert his raging Courſe.

Cyr. Might not we then
By the ſame means now drain *Euphrates* dry,
And through its Channel march into the City?

Gobr. Suppoſe this done: yet ſtill the brazen Gates,
Which from the City to the River lead,
Will bar our Paſſage, always ſhut by Night,
When we muſt make th' Attempt. Could we ſuppoſe
Thoſe Gates unſhut, we might indeed aſcend
With eaſe into the City.

Cyr. Said you not,
This is the Feaſt to *Seſach* conſecrate?
And that the *Babylonians* ſpend the Night
In drunken Revels, and in looſe Diſorder?

Gobr. They do; and 'tis Religion to be drunk
On this occaſion.

AIR.

Behold the monſtrous Human Beaſt
Wallowing in exceſſive Feaſt!
No more his Maker's Image found:
But ſelf-degraded to a Swine,
He fixes grov'ling on the Ground
His Portion of the Breath Divine. Da Capo.

RECIT.

Cyr. Can you then think it ſtrange, if drown'd in Wine,
And from above infatuate, they neglect
The Means of their own Safety?

AIR.

Great God! who yet but darkly known,
Thus far haſt deign'd my Arms to bring;
Support me ſtill, while I pull down
Aſſyria's proud injurious King.

So ſhall this Hand thy Altars raiſe,
This Tongue for ever ſing thy Praiſe;
And all thy Will, when clearly ſhown,
By thy glad Servant ſhall be done.

RECIT.

My Friends, be confident, and boldly enter
Upon this high Exploit. No little Cauſe
We have to hope Succeſs; ſince not unjuſtly
We have attack'd, but being firſt attack'd,
We have purſu'd th' Aggreſſor. Add to this,

That I proceed in nothing with Neglect *
Of Pow'r divine: Whate'er I undertake,
I ſtill begin with God, and gain his Favour
By Sacrifice and Prayer.

CHORUS.

All Empires upon God depend;
Begun by his Command, at his Command they end.
Look up to him in all your Ways:
Begin with Pray'r, and end with Praiſe.
- - - - - Without his Aid you war in vain:
- - - - - Be ſubject: —— 'Tis the way to reign.

SCENE III.

DANIEL's *Houſe.*

Daniel, *with the Prophecies of* Iſaiah *and* Jeremiah *open before him:* *Other* Jews.

AIR.

Dan. *O ſacred Oracles of Truth!*
O living Spring of pureſt Joy!
By Day be ever in my Mouth,
And all my nightly Thoughts employ.
Whoe'er withhold Attention due
Neglect themſelves, deſpiſing you. Da Capo.

RECIT. *accompany'd.*

Rejoice, my Countrymen: The Time draws near,
The long expected Time herein foretold. *Jer.* xxix.
Seek now the Lord your God with all your Heart,
And you ſhall ſurely find him. He ſhall turn
Your long Captivity: he ſhall gather you
From all the Nations whither you are driven,
And to your native Land in Peace reſtore you.

O Lord! the great and dreadful God!
Juſtly thou haſt thy Curſes pour'd
On our rebellious Heads:
For ours and for our Fathers Sins
Thy People are become the Scorn
Of all the Nations round.

Yet

* Xenoph. Cyrop. lib. 1.

Yet in thy Wrath remember Mercy:
O! be thy Fury turn'd away:
Not for our Righteouſneſs,
But for thine own great Mercies ſake!
O Lord, hear: O Lord, forgive:
Defer not, for thine own ſake, O our God! ——
For we are thine, and bear thy Name.

Dan. Doubt not, our Pray'r is heard; ——
For long ago,
Whole Ages ere this *Cyrus* yet was born
Or thought of, Great *Jehovah*, by his Prophet,
In Words of Comfort to his captive People
Foretold, and call'd by Name the wondrous Man.

RECIT. *accompany'd.*

" Thus ſaith the Lord to *Cyrus* his Anointed, *Iſa.* xliv. & xlv.
" Whoſe right Hand I have holden, to ſubdue
" Nations before him: I will go before thee,
" To looſe the Strong-knit Loins of mighty Kings,
" Make ſtraight the crooked Places, break in pieces
" The Gates of ſolid Braſs, and cut in ſunder
" The Bars of Iron. For my Servants ſake,
" *Iſr'el* my Choſen, though thou haſt not known me,
" I have ſurnam'd thee: I have girded thee:
" That from the riſing to the ſetting Sun
" The Nations may confeſs, I am the Lord,
" There is none elſe, there is no God beſides me.
" Thou ſhalt perform my Pleaſure, to *Jeruſalem*
" Saying, Thou ſhalt be built; and to the Temple,
" Thy raz'd Foundation ſhall again be laid."

CHORUS.

Sing, O ye Heavens, for the Lord hath done it:
Earth, from thy Center ſhout:
Break forth, ye Mountains, into Songs of Joy,
O Foreſt, and each Tree therein:
Jehovah *hath redeemed* Jacob,
And glorify'd himſelf in Iſrael. Hallelujah.

SCENE IV. *The* PALACE.

Belshazzar, Nitocris, Babylonians *and* Jews.

AIR.

Belsh. *Let festal Joy triumphant reign,*
Glad ev'ry Heart, in ev'ry Face appear:
Free flow the Wine, nor flow in vain;
Far fly corroding Care.
Each Hand the Chime melodious raise,
Each Voice exult in Belach's Praise.
Let Order vanish; Liberty alone,
Unbounded Liberty the Night shall crown.

RECIT.

For you, my Friends, the Nobles of my Court
I have prepar'd a Feast magnificent,
Worthy of You and Me. | A while begone
Invidious Royalty, unfriendly Form,
Partial Distinction, betwixt King and Subject,
Master and Vassal: | In their Room succeed
Familiar Conversation, social Mirth,
Equality promiscuous. But this Night
I taste of Happiness; the Year besides
Is sacrific'd to State. | Let all my Wives,
And Concubines attend. Our Royal Mother——

Nit. I must prevent thee, Son! Who can endure
Th' unbridl'd Licence of this Festival,
Miscall'd by the Licentious, Liberty?
When nought prevails but riotous Excess,
The noisy idiot Laugh, the jest obscene,
The scurril Taunt, and drunken midnight Brawl.
My Soul starts back at such Brutality,
Asserting Reason's Empire.

AIR.

The leafy Honours of the Field,
Before the boist'rous driving Wind,
In giddy Dissipation fly.
To Noise and Folly fond to yield,
The fair Ideas quit the Mind,
And lost in wild Confusion lie. Da Capo.

Belſh. It is the Cuſtom; I may ſay, the Law,
By long Preſcription fix'd — Theſe Captive *Jews!* —
[*Looking round and ſpying the* Jews.
What do They here? — they low'r upon our Joys,
And envy Liberty they cannot taſte.
Yet ſomething your perverſe and wayward Nation
Shall to our Mirth contribute. Bring thoſe Veſſels —
Thoſe coſtly Veſſels my victorious Grandſire
Took from the Temple of *Jeruſalem*,
And in the Temple of great *Bel* laid up,
But us'd them not: 'tis fit they ſhould be us'd:
And let their God, whoſe Pow'r was found too weak
To ſave his People, ſerve the Conquerors
Of him and them. We'll revel in his Cups:
Their rich Materials and choice Workmanſhip
Shall well augment the Splendor of our Feaſt.
And, as we drink, we'll praiſe our Country Gods,
To whom we owe the Prize.
Nit. O Sacrilege!
Unheard of Profanation!

CHORUS of *Jews.*

Recall, O King, thy raſh Command;
Nor proſtitute with impious Hand
To Uſes vile the holy Things
Of great Jehovah, *King of Kings.*
Thy Grandſire trembled at his Name,
And doom'd to Death who durſt blaſpheme;
For, he, like us, his Pow'r had try'd;
Confeſs'd him Juſt in all his Ways,
Confeſs'd him able to abaſe
The Sons of Men that walk in Pride.

Nit. They tell you true; nor can you be to learn
(Tho' Eaſe and Pleaſure have ingroſs'd you all,)
Things done in publick View. I'll not repeat
The ſev'nfold-heated Furnace, by that God
Whom you defy, made to his faithful Servants
A Walk of Recreation; nor the King,
In height of all his Pride, drove from his Throne,
And from the firſt of Men, in Thought a God,
Reduc'd to brutal Rank: All this, and more,
Thou know'ſt as well as I, and ſhouldſt conſider.

Belſh. Away! — Is then my Mother Convert grown
To *Jewiſh* Superſtition? — Apoſtate Queen!
Theſe idle Tales might well become the Dotage
Of palſy'd Eld, but not a Queen like you,
In Prime of Life, for Wiſdom far renown'd.
On to the Feaſt: I waſte the Time too long
In frivolous Diſpute; Time, due of Right
To Pleaſure and the Gods.

DUET.

Nit. *O dearer than my Life, forbear,*
Profane not, O my Son,
With impious Rites Jehovah's *Name:*
Remember what his Arm has done:
The Earth contains not half his Fame:
Remember, and his Vengeance fear.

Belſh. *O Queen, this hateful Theme forbear:*
Join not againſt your Son
With Captive Slaves, your Country's Foes:
Remember what our Gods have done
To theſe, who durſt their Pow'r oppoſe:
Remember, and their Vengeance fear.

Nit. *Alas! then muſt I ſee my Son*
Headlong to ſure Deſtruction run?

Belſh. *Not to Deſtruction but Delight*
I fly, and all once more invite
To reign with me this happy Night. [*Exeunt* ſeverally.

Chorus *of* Jews.

By ſlow Degrees the Wrath of God to its meridian Height aſcends;
There Mercy long the dreadful Bolt ſuſpends,
Ere it offending Man annoy;
Long patient for Repentance waits, reluctant to deſtroy.
At length the Wretch, obdurate grown,
Infatuated makes
The Ruin all his own;
And every Step he takes
On his devoted Head
Precipitates the Thunder down.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE, *Without the City, the River almoſt empty.*

CYRUS, *&c.*

CHORUS.

SEE, from his Poſt Euphrates *flies!*
The Stream withdraws his guardian Wave!
Fenceleſs the Queen of Cities lies!

SEMI-CHORUS.

Why faithleſs River doſt thou leave
Thy Charge to hoſtile Arms a Prey,
Expoſe the Lives thou ought'ſt to ſave,
Prepare the fierce Invader's Way,
And, like falſe Man, thy Truſt betray?

SEMI-CHORUS.

Euphrates *hath his Task fulfill'd,*
But to Divine Decree muſt yield.
While Babel *Queen of Cities reign'd,*
The Flood her Guardian was ordain'd;
Now to ſuperior Pow'r gives place,
And but the Doom of Heav'n obeys.

CHORUS.

Of Things on Earth, proud Man muſt own,
Falſhood is found in Man alone.

Cyr. You ſee, my Friends, a Path into the City
Lies open: fearleſs let us enter, knowing
That thoſe we are to cope with are the ſame
We have already conquer'd, ſtrengthen'd then
With Aid of great and numerous Allies,
Wakeful and ſober, rank'd in juſt Array;
Now all aſleep or drunk, at beſt diſorder'd:
A helpleſs State! ſtill worſe, when they ſhall hear
We are within their Walls.

AIR.

AIR.

Amaz'd to find the Foe so near,
When Sleep and Wine their Senses drown,
All Hearts shall faint, and melt with Fear,
All Hands unnerv'd fall feebly down.
Useless the Hero's Valour lies,
Useless the Counsel of the Wise. Da Capo.

CHORUS.

To Arms, to Arms; no more Delay,
God and Cyrus *lead the Way.* [They descend into the River.

SCENE II.

A Banquet Room, adorn'd with the Images of the *Babylonian* Gods. *Belshazzar*, his Wives, Concubines, and Lords, drinking out of the *Jewish* Temple-Vessels, and singing the Praises of their Gods.

CHORUS.

Ye tutelar Gods of our Empire, look down,
And see what rich Trophies your Victory crown.
Let your own bounteous Gifts, which our Gratitude raise,
Gold, Wine, merry Notes pay our Tribute of Praise.

--- Bel *first we sing, great Lord of all below:*
To thee our Wealth and Pow'r we owe.
Thee, Nebo, *next, whose Wisdom all admire,*
--- *For Prescience fam'd, of Arts the Sire.*
Sesach, *this Night is chiefly thine,*
Kind Donor of the sparkling Wine.

AIR.

Belsh. *Let the deep Bowl thy Praise confess,*
Thy Gifts the gracious Giver bless.
Thy Gifts of all the Gods bestow,
Improve by use, and sweeter grow.
Another Bowl! — 'tis gen'rous Wine
Exalts the Human to Divine.

RECIT.

Where is the God of *Judah*'s boasted Pow'r?
Let him reclaim his lost Magnificence,

Assert

Assert his Rights, prov'd ours by long Possession,
And vindicate his injur'd Honour. —— Ah! ——

[*As he is going to drink, a Hand appears writing upon the Wall over-against him; he sees it, turns pale with Fear, drops the Bowl of Wine, falls back in his Seat, trembling from Head to Foot, and his Knees knocking against each other.*

CHORUS.

Help, help the King: he faints! he dies!
What envious Dæmon blasts our Joys,
And into Sorrow turns!
Look up, O King — speak — chear thy Friends:
Say, why our Mirth thus sudden ends,
And the gay Circle mourns!

Belsh. Behold! — See there! ——

[*Pointing to the Hand upon the Wall, which, while they gaze at it with Astonishment, finishes the Writing, and vanishes.*

CHORUS.

O dire, portentous Sight! —— but see, 'tis gone,
And leaves behind it Types unknown:
Perhaps some stern Decree of Fate,
Big with the Ruin of our State!
What God, or godlike Man, can tell
The Sense of this mysterious Spell?

Belsh. Call all our Wisemen, Sorcerers, *Chaldeans*,
Astrologers, Magicians, Soothsayers:
They can perhaps unfold the mystick Words,
Dispel our Doubts, and ease us of our Fears.

[*A Symphony.*]

Enter Wisemen of Babylon.

Belsh. Ye Sages, welcome always to your King,
Most welcome now, since needed most: O minister
To my sick Mind the Med'cine of your Art.
Whoe'er shall read this Writing and interpret,
A splendid purple Robe behind him flows,
A Chain of Gold his honour'd Neck shall grace,
And in the Kingdom he shall rule the Third.
Wisem. Alas! too hard a Task the King imposes,
To read the Characters we never learn'd!

CHORUS.

O Misery! — O Terror — hopeless Grief!
Nor God nor Man afford Relief!
Who can this Mystery unveil,
When all our wise Diviners fail!

Enter Nitocris.

Nit. [*Aside.*] How soon the Scene is chang'd! he, who but now
Breath'd nought but Mirth and Gaiety, defy'd
The God of Heav'n, and wilful stopp'd his Ears
To all Advice, now pale and spiritless,
And helpless sits with all his Gods about him,
Who know not his Distress; and could they know,
They could not bring him Aid. But I must now
Speak Comfort to him, nor increase his Woes
Too great already—— [*To* Belsh.] O King, live for ever!
Let not thy Heart its wonted Courage lose,
Nor let thy Countenance be chang'd with Fear.
Tho' all thy Wisemen fail thee, in thy Kingdom
There is a Man, among the *Jewish* Captives,
In whom the holy Spirit of God resides:
And in thy Grandsire *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Days
Wisdom, like that of God, was found in him,
By which he could interpret mystick Dreams,
Explain hard Sentences, dissolve all Doubts:
Daniel his native Name, but by the King
Nam'd *Belteshazzar*. Let him now be call'd:
He'll read the Writing, and interpret it.

AIR.

Wise Men, flatt'ring, may deceive
With their vain mysterious Art
Magic Charms can ne'er relieve y
Nor can heal the wounded Hear

But true Wisdom can relieve you,
Godlike Wisdom, from above;
This alone can ne'er deceive you,
This alone all Pains remove.

Enter Daniel.

Belsh. Art thou that *Daniel*, of the *Jewish* Captives?
I have heard of thee, that a Spirit divine
Resides in thee; that Light, and Understanding,
And Wisdom excellent is found in thee.
Thou seest this Writing on the Wall: The Wisemen,
Who all were brought before me, could not read it,
Much less interpret. I have heard of thee,
That thou canst find Interpretations deep,
And dissolve knotty Doubts. If thou canst read
This Writing, and explain, a purple Robe
Adorns thy Body, a gold Chain thy Neck,
And in the Kingdom thou shalt rule the Third.

AIR.

AIR.

Dan. *No: To thyſelf thy Triſles be,*
Or take thy rich Rewards who will:
Such glitt'ring Traſh affects not me,
Intent on greater Matters ſtill.

RECIT. *accompany'd.*

Yet to obey his dread Command,
Who vindicates his Honour *now,*
I'll read this Oracle, and thou,
But to thy Coſt, ſhalt underſtand.

RECIT. *accompany'd.*

The moſt high God, O King, gave to thy Grandſire
A Kingdom, Majeſty, Glory and Honour:
All People, Nations, Tongues trembled before him:
Whome'er he would he ſlew, or kept alive;
Whome'er he would exalted, or abas'd.
But when from hence his Heart was lifted up,
His Mind harden'd in Pride, he was depos'd
His kingly Throne, his Glory taken from him;
Driv'n from the Sons of Men with Beaſts he dwelt,
Himſelf become a Beaſt; nor was reſtor'd,
Till humbly he confeſs'd, the moſt high God
Rules in the Kingdom of Men, and over it
Appoints whome'er he will. And Thou, *Belſhazzar*,
His Grandſon, though thou knoweſt all theſe things,
Yet haſt not humbled thy proud Heart to God,
But lifted up thyſelf againſt the Lord
Of Heav'n, whoſe Veſſels they have brought before thee,
And thou, thy Lords, thy Wives and Concubines
Have drunk Wine in them: Thou haſt prais'd the Gods
Of Gold and Silver, Braſs, Iron, Wood and Stone,
Which neither ſee, nor hear, nor ought perceive:
But Him, the God whoſe Hand upholds thy Life,
And in whoſe high Diſpoſe are all thy Ways,
Thou haſt not glorify'd, but haſt blaſphem'd.
From him the Hand was ſent, by his Appointment
Theſe Words were written: which I thus interpret.

*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.**

Mene, *The God, whom thou haſt thus diſhonour'd,*
The Days hath number'd *of thy Reign,*
And finiſh'd it.
Tekel, *Thou in the Balances art* weigh'd,
And art found wanting.
Peres, *Thy Kingdom is* divided,
And to the Medes *and* Perſians *given.*

Nit. O Sentence too ſevere! and yet too ſure!
Unleſs Repentance may reverſe the Doom.
Perhaps, my Son, it is not yet too late,
To take thy Mother's Counſel erſt deſpis'd,
Revere the God whoſe Name thou haſt blaſphem'd,
Implore his Pardon with repentant Tears,
Redeem Offences paſt by Righteouſneſs,
Shew Mercy to the Poor, and obtain Mercy.
God yet may lengthen thy Tranquillity,
And thou — and I in thee — may yet be happy.

AIR.

Regard, O Son, my flowing Tears,
Proofs of maternal Love:
Regard thyſelf: to cure thy Fears,
Regard the God above.
Repentance ſure will Mercy find,
But Wrath purſues th' obdurate Mind. Da Capo. [*Exit.*

Belſh. Tho' thy Interpretation found ſo harſh,
Yet I'll perform my Promiſe. Let him wear
A ſplendid purple Robe, with a gold Chain
His Neck be grac'd; and to complete his Greatneſs,
Proclaim him the third Ruler in the Kingdom.

Dan. *Your Tinſel Ornaments forbear:*
Your empty Titles wave: the Time is near,
When thou and all thy gaudy Train
From ſad Experience ſhall confeſs,
(Great Truth! how little underſtood!)
The Robe moſt ſplendid, Righteouſneſs;
Virtue the only graceful Chain;
None truly Great, except the Good.

SCENE

* *Mene, number'd; Tekel, weigh'd; Upharſin, and they divide,* or *ſhall divide; Peres* is the Participle Paſſive ſingular, *divided; Pharſin* the Active plural.

SCENE III.

Cyrus, Gobryas, *&c. within the City.*

AIR.

Cyr. *O God of Truth! O faithful Guide!*
Well haſt thou kept thy Word!
Deep Waves at my Approach ſubſide;
The brazen Portals open wide,
Glad to receive their Lord.

The hoſtile Nations ſcatter'd fly,
Nor dare my Preſence ſtay:
Where'er I go, ſure Victory
Attends; for God is always nigh,
And he prepares my way.

RECIT.

You, *Gobryas*, lead directly to the Palace;
For you beſt know the way. This revelling Herd
Cannot oppoſe our Paſſage; thoſe who would,
Fall eaſy Victims: For the reſt, they fly,
Or take us for their Friends, and reeling ſhout
For Joy: We'll *be* their *Friends*, and join the Shout.
I ſeek no Enemy except the Tyrant;
When he is ſlain our Task is at an end.
My worthy Friends, let us not ſtain our Swords
With *needleſs* Slaughter: I begin already
To count this People mine, myſelf their Shepherd,
Whoſe Office is to feed and to protect them,
Not to deſtroy.

CHORUS.

O glorious Prince! thrice happy they,
Born to enjoy thy future Sway!
To all like thee were Scepters giv'n,
Kings were like Gods, and Earth like Heav'n:
Subjection free, unforc'd, would prove
Obedience is the Child of Love:
The Jars of Nations ſoon will ceaſe,
Sweet Liberty, beatiſick Peace
Would ſtretch their Reign from Shore to Shore,
And War and Slav'ry be no more.

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE *the* PALACE.

Nitocris, Daniel, Jews.

AIR.

Nit. *ALternate Hopes and Fears distract my Mind:*
My weary Soul no Reſt can find.
My buſy Fancy now preſents
A gracious Scene; my Son repents,
And God recalls his Doom:
Now to falſe Shame he quits his Fears,
Falſe Courage takes, and madly dares
His impious Feaſt reſume:
Then Arms and dying Groans reſound,
And Streams of Blood guſh out around.

Fain would I know th' Effect of this late Prodigy,
Of your Reproof and ſtern Prophetick Threats,
Of my Advice inforc'd with Tears of Love.

RECIT.

Fain would I hope —— Is there not room for
Can he be ſo inſenſate to reſiſt
Such pow'rful Arguments, ſo ſtrongly urg'd
By his own Fears? Can ſuch Perverſeneſs dwe
In human Hearts? —— It cannot ſurely be!
Dan. O that it could not! —— But if I may
The Future by the Paſt, it were vain Flatt'ry
To bid you hope for his Converſion.

AIR.

Daniel. *Can the black Æthiop change his Skin?*
His native Spots the Leopard loſe?
Then may the Heart obdur'd in Sin,
Grow ſoft, repent, and Virtue chooſe!
Threats or Advice but move Diſdain,
And Signs and Wonders glare in vain.

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE *the Pa*

Nitocris, Daniel, Jews.

AIR.

Nit. *Alternate Hopes and Fears diſtract*
My weary Soul no Reſt can find.
My buſy Fancy now preſents
A gracious Scene; my Son repents,
And God recalls his Doom:
Now to falſe Shame he quits his Fears,
Falſe Courage takes, and madly dares
His impious Feaſt reſume:
Then Arms and dying Groans reſound,
And Streams of Blood guſh out around.

Fain would I know th' Effect of this late Prodig
Of your Reproof and ſtern Prophetick Threats,
Of my Advice inforc'd with Tears of Love.

RECIT.

Fain would I hope —— Is there not room for Hope?
Can he be ſo inſenſate to reſiſt
Such pow'rful Arguments, ſo ſtrongly urg'd
By his own Fears? Can ſuch Perverſeneſs dwell
In human Hearts? —— It cannot ſurely be!
Dan. O that it could not! —— But if I may judge
The Future by the Paſt, it were vain Flatt'ry
To bid you hope for his Converſion.

AIR.

Daniel. *Can the black Æthiop change his Skin?*
His native Spots the Leopard loſe?
Then may the Heart obdur'd in Sin,
Grow ſoft, repent, and Virtue chooſe!
Threats or Advice but move Diſdain,
And Signs and Wonders glare in vain.

Enter

AIR.

Fain would I know, if Virtue confeſſing,
He now would learn to ſeize on the Bleſſing,
Taught by that Lore that comes from above.
Fain would I hope, your Threatnings availing,
And your Reproofs ſeverely prevailing,
Before'd with Tears of maternal Love.

Enter Arioch.

Nit. My Hopes revive, here *Ariach* comes: By this
'Tis plain the Revels are broke up. Say, *Arioch*,
Where is the King?

Ar. When you had left the Room,
A while deep Silence reign'd: The King sat penſive,
As doubting whether to break up the Banquet,
Or to continue. At length ſome Paraſites,
Thoſe Inſects vile that ſtill infeſt a Court,
Began to miniſter falſe Comfort to him:
Surmis'd, the Hand that wrote upon the Wall
Might be ſome juggling Trick, ſome pious Fraud,
Contriv'd by *Jews* to vindicate their Faith,
And ſave the Honour of their God: Suppoſe
'Twere no Impoſture, but the Hand of Heav'n,
Yet *Daniel* might miſtake the Senſe: At worſt,
No Time was fix'd; the Judgments he denounc'd
Might yet be Years to come: The preſent Moment
Was theirs, their wiſeſt courſe was to enjoy it,
Nor loſe the certain Preſent for the Future,
Uncertain when to come. | With this, again
They ſat them down to drink: The Bowl went round:
The King forgot his Fears, the Wine inſpir'd him,
And he blaſphem'd again. Not long we ſat,
When from without the Gates a Noiſe tumultuous
Was heard, loud Shouts and Cries, and claſhing Arms.
The King deputed ſome to learn the Cauſe.
I gladly ſeiz'd the Opportunity,
And fled a Place to ſwift Deſtruction doom'd.

Enter a Meſſenger.

Meſſ. All's loſt! —— The Fate of *Babylon* is finiſh'd!
Cyrus is here, —— even within the Palace!

Nit. Cyrus! —— impoſſible!

Meſſ. It is too true.
A Tumult heard without, the Gates unbarr'd
Diſclos'd a dreadful Scene: The Guards o'erpow'r'd
By Numbers far ſuperior, fell before them
With faint Reſiſtance. The victorious Foe
No ſooner ſaw the Gates ſet open wide,
But ruſh'd at once, and eaſy Entrance gain'd.

Dan. Thus is at length fulfill'd what God foretold
Long since by his great Prophet. Now, O Queen,
The Time *is come.* Be ſtrong, and arm yourſelf
With all your Virtue. This Empire is no more.
Your Son —— I ſpare your Grief. Convert your Thoughts
To what may comfort you. The Paſt and Preſent
Are to God's Juſtice due; the Future Time
Hope to his Mercy gives. Whate'er he does
Is beſt. Let this ſink deep into your Mind,
Aſſwage your Griefs, and diſſipate your Fears.

Chorus of *Jews.*

Bel *boweth down!* Nebo *ſtoopeth!*
How is Seſach *taken!*
And how is the Praiſe of the whole Earth ſurpriſ'd!
Thy Counſel ſtands, O Lord,
And thou doſt all thy Pleaſure:
---- Elam *is come up,* Media *hath beſieged:*
All our Sighing haſt thou made to ceaſe.
For the Lord will have Mercy on Jacob,
And will yet chooſe Iſrael,
And ſet them in their own Land.

SCENE II.

Balſhazzar, *his Lords, and other* Babylonians, *with their Swords drawn.*

AIR.

Belſh. *I thank thee,* Seſach, *thy ſweet Pow'r*
Does to myſelf myſelf reſtore.
Thy plenteous Heart-inſpiring Juice
All my Courage loſt renews.
I bluſh to think I ſhadows fear'd ——
Cyrus, *come on: I'm now prepar'd.*

[Exeunt to meet *Cyrus.*

A martial Symphony, during which a Battle is ſuppoſ'd, in which Belſhazzar *and his Attendants are ſlain.*

SCENE

SCENE III.

Cyrus, Gobryas, &c.

AIR.

Gobr. *To Pow'r immortal my firſt Thanks are due:*
My next, great Cyrus, *let me pay to you;*
Whoſe Arm this impious King laid low,
The bitter Source of all my Woe.
Tears, ſure, will all my Life employ!
Ev'n now I weep, — but weep for Joy.

RECIT.

Cyr. Be it thy Care, good *Gobryas*, to find out
The Queen, and that great *Jew*, of whom thou told'ſt me;
Guard them in Safety hither; if Harm befall them,
I ſhall repent and curſe my Victory. [*Exit* Gobryas.

AIR.

Cyr. *Deſtructive War thy limits know:*
Here, Tyrant Death, thy Terrors end.
To Tyrants only I'm a Foe,
To Virtue, and her Friends, a Friend.
Let Tyrants keep their Slaves in Awe,
Who hate, yet fear to break their Chain:
From hence thy Glory, Cyrus, *draw,*
In human Hearts to fix thy Reign.

Re-enter Gobryas, *with* Nitocris, Daniel, *and* Jews.

DUET.

Nit. *Great Victor, at your Feet I bow,*
No more a Queen, — your Vaſſal now!
My People ſpare: — Forgive my Fears!
I mourn a Son! — Indulge my Tears;
Reſiſtleſs Nature bids them flow.

Cyr. *Riſe, virtuous Queen, compoſe your Mind,*
Give Fear and Sorrow to the Wind;
Safe are your People, if they will:
Be ſtill a Queen, a Mother ſtill;
A Son in Cyrus *you ſhall find.*

RECIT.

Cyr. to *Dan.* Say, venerable Prophet, is there ought
In *Cyrus'* Pow'r, by which he can oblige
Thee, or thy People?

Dan. O victorious Prince!
The God of *Iſrael*, Lord of Heav'n and Earth,
Long ere thy Birth foretold thee by thy Name,
And ſhew'd thy Conqueſts! 'Tis to him thou ow'ſt,
To him thou muſt aſcribe them. Read thoſe Lines,
The great Prediction which thou haſt already
In part accompliſh'd, and (we truſt) will ſoon
Fulfil the reſt.

[*Giving him part of* Iſaiah's *Prophecy, which* Cyrus *reads.*
How falſe and weak is human Policy!
Which lays deep Schemes of raiſing, governing,
Preſerving Empires, not regarding him
By whom Kings reign, and Empires riſe and fall!

CHORUS.

Tell it out among the Heathen, that the Lord is King.
--- He maketh the Devices of the People of none Effect:
He caſteth out the Counſels of Princes:
He putteth down one, and ſetteth up another.

RECIT. *accompany'd.*

Cyr. Yes, I will build thy City, God of *Iſrael*,
will releaſe thy Captives; not for Price,
Not for Reward, but to perform thy Pleaſure.
Thus proſtrate I confeſs, Thou art the Lord,
There is none elſe; there is no God beſides thee.
Thou condeſcendeſt to call me thy Shepherd,
And I will feed thy Flock. To me thou haſt given
The Kingdoms of the Earth: and ſhall I ſuffer
Thy Kingdom to lie waſte, thy choſen People
In Exile and Captivity to wander?
Far be from *Cyrus* ſuch Ingratitude.
Hear, holy People; hear, Elect of God.
The God of *Iſrael* — (he alone is God)
Hath charg'd me to rebuild his Houſe and City,
And let his exil'd captive People go.
With Tranſport I obey. Be free, ye Captives,
And to your native Land in Peace return.
Thou, O *Jeruſalem*, ſhalt be rebuilt;

O Temple, thy Foundation ſhall be laid.
No Thanks to me! — To God return your Thanks,
As I do mine: We all are to his Goodneſs
Indebted deep: to him be all the Praiſe.

ANTHEM.

I will magnify thee, O God my King,
And I will praiſe thy Name for ever and ever;
My Mouth ſhall ſpeak the Praiſe of the Lord,
And let all Fleſh give Thanks
Unto his holy Name for ever and ever. Amen.

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